

Dear Incoming 8th Grader,

Howdy there! 8th English is tough...But not too tough you can't handle it. There are a ton of fun assignments that also help with skills.

The main thing that you should remember for next year is do all of your work on time. Do not procrastinate because there are a lot of projects. I had the most homework and projects out of any class in English, and whenever I procrastinated, it made the night before they were due really tough. Be thorough in your work, always make sure you don't make stupid mistakes like bad structure. When you go through your projects, make sure that you follow the correct steps. For example, when you get to the Unit on Connotative Analysis, when you make analysis, always remember to use the four steps. (You'll find out what that means in a while).

There is going to be a lot of self reflection and metacognitive skills, which is how well you can assess yourself. Know how good you are at everything, and if you're not too great, that's okay.

Always take edits into consideration, because if you don't accept criticism, you will never get better. Take everything that you can get. If there is ever an opportunity to boost your grade, take it!

There will be many fun projects, and many hard ones but you need to spend the same amount of time and effort on each to make them your best work. Know what you can do, and you will be good. Balance your time well and do not stress too much. Get things done on time, but leave time to still do things you like. Finding the right balance is key. Have fun and do work!

Sincerely,

Ex Middle School President Sam W.

6/8/12

Dear incoming 8th grade,

Coming into 8th grade I think that you should know, and learn from, my mistakes. The essays are hard but if you stay on task and start them earlier rather than later you will be much better off. Also for one of the big essays, Historical Fiction, start early get all your facts done for the first deadline instead of only the required amount. When a bibliography is needed start it and continue it as the project goes on, don't wait until the end of the project to do the bibliography. When there is work to be done close all other applications, other than music if that helps you, and get to work.

Over the course of the year there will be four to five paragraph quizzes that you will have to do. They may take a long time, but doing the reading more than once and practicing connotative analysis on your own time will help you so much. Also come into eighth grade expecting a lot of work and be ready to get it done. Keep a log of your reading and get as much done at one time as possible.

Now some of you may read this and say "I have my own ways to get things done, I have a routine that works." I know that you will say this because I did. So when you read this take it into consideration, think about it. You may not need it now but later in the year you may look back on my, or somebody else's essay and think "I should have listened." Good luck!!!

Sincerely,

Matt F.

Dear incoming 8th graders,

Before I give you advice, I just want you all to know that while Ms. Koh's class may be hard, if you don't stress out, and if you participate fully and take advantage of the things she tries to teach you, you'll be rewarded with lots of knowledge.

If I had a chance to just start 8th grade over, I would definitely pay more attention to Ms. Koh's editing marks and make sure I incorporate her edits into my final draft. When she gives you guys feedback (it may be a little harsh), don't think she 'hates' you and get mad, just know that she wants you to be a better writer.

For me personally, our connotative analysis unit was very challenging. My advice to all of you is that if you find something to be confusing, or hard, just ask Ms. Koh to help you out after class and she would be more than willing to do so.

Many of you are probably wondering, am I really prepared for this class? As long as you pay attention and have a hard work ethic and are able take other people's critiques positively, then you will do great in this English class.

Sincerely,
Jacob S.

Dear future 8th grade,

I had a great year in english. I think this was the best english year ever. We learned a lot. But it is also super hard. If you want to get a good grade you will have to work your butt off. I wish I had known that when I was going into this english class. I wish I had worked as hard as I could. You really

need to know what you are doing, and the only way to do that is to listen to everything Ms. Koh says because it is all very important. Everything she is teaching will be used in high-school and everything else you do in your life. If you do not listen and do all your work when you have to you will fall behind and will not know anything. The main thing that you will work on is connotations and critical thinking. Everything that you do in 8th grade english is based on this. Always listen, do your work and have a great time in english (it is really hard so you have to give it a lot of effort or else you will not get a good grade)!!!

Sincerely,
Josh F.

6/8/12

Dear incoming 8th graders,

As you begin your last year of middle school and Wornick, you will learn a lot. From the human body in science to the constitution in history to your trip to Israel, you all have a full year filled with learning.

English will be a subject that will test you and force you expand your opinions on everything. Some advice I have is keep your mind open, always pay attention because everything matters, and think creatively. Also if you don't understand something always ask for help. I speak from experience because I didn't ask for help and that slowed down how much I learned.

Be open to feedback, learn from your mistakes and learn how to critique yourself. On a personal level, do not make drama, remember everything because it's the little moments you miss once you leave, and remember that a bad grade is not the end of the world. There will always be

assignments that you don't do well in, do not let that get you down, always be passionate at whatever you do and do your best in all your work even if you don't like the project. For 8th grade English, you should know how to work with others, there are lots of group projects, know how to write 5 paragraphs essay with structure and analysis, and most of all know how to think critically about what influences you. My last piece of advice to give you is to learn with open and thoughtful minds and have the best time as the Graduating Class of 2013.

Sincerely,
Abby S.

Dear next year's Eighth Grade,

When I first started eighth grade I was really worried. I was worried because I had no idea what english was going to be like. I was told that eighth grade english was so much harder than seventh grade. I had no idea that it would actually be a really fun and enjoyable class. The worst mistake I made all year was thinking that Mrs. Koh hated me and was trying to ruin english for me. Remember she is just trying to make you a better writer no matter how bad it may seem. And don't worry it will eventually pay of and you'll be glad you were in this class. Also remember to keep an open mind about everything you are taught, it all helps in some way. And if Mrs. Koh gives you a choice on what you want to learn about around 2/3 of the way through the year, pick advertisements because you get to create your own company and stuff. Then present it and see how appealing it is to your class. I also have one piece of advice. Kids, do your homework. DO NOT

try to get out of it because it will only end up hurting YOU.

Sincerely, your AMAZING, BEST friend:

ARIIII F.

6-8-12

Dear 8th grade english,

I would like to wish you luck for your year in 8th grade english. Remember to pay attention in class, listen to all instructions, turn in assignments, and do homework. Do not put assignments off to the last minute because that may make you feel overloaded and stressed with work. When you get to the point of the year when you learn connotative analysis, make sure to focus and learn the skill. Also, remember to use connotative analysis in essays, instead of sometimes forgetting like I did. If you are assigned reading homework or short stories, read them because they will be used to help in in-class essays. You should look forward to the Outliers unit because you get to plan a lesson and teach the class in a creative way. Try to come up with engaging and informative activities that will help the other students learn. The goal is for the students to understand your topic and hopefully enjoy your teaching. Another assignment I enjoyed was the Historical Fiction essay that is not until the last few months of school. A tip for the essay is to make sure you fully understand the aspects of society during the characters time period. At first, I thought I knew enough about the early 1940's to start writing right away, but I later had to go back and spend more time researching. Try to get into your characters head and think critically about how their life would

really be. There may be bumps along the way, but as long as you try your absolute best, you will hopefully succeed this year!

Good luck,
Rachel B.

Dear incoming 8th graders,

Eighth grade year is going to be the best so far at Wornick. It is so much fun to be the oldest in the school.

In English class, eighth grade year is the most information we have learned so far. It is an extremely challenging class but if you really dedicate yourself, you will be able to succeed. Going into this year you should know to keep an open mind about everything. Even if it may not seem fun, or it is the tenth time you've done something, it really does pay off. You need to trust Ms. Koh because everything she is teaching you does have an important purpose and will help you in the future. You also need to trust yourself. If there was one thing I could have done differently this year, overall, it would be to have more trust in my own work. If you have a clarifying question, or you are confused about something, do not be scared to ask. If you just need reassurance, ask your friend or try to figure it out on your own. Once you are able to trust yourself, it gives you a sense of self pride.

This year is going to be filled with projects that are hard, and maybe a little less hard, but you need to put your best effort into everything. A project that was easier for me was teaching the class about a chapter from Outliers. I started the project with a lot of ideas and ways to make them work. Even though this project was on the easier side for me, I still put well over ten

hours of work into it. A project that was harder for me was the historical fiction short story, and I undoubtedly put over ten hours of work into that as well. Do not get yourself too freaked out over projects, if you have put in your best work, trust yourself.

There are a few things over the year that you might end up feeling like you are doing too much of and might seem extremely hard. Especially in the connotative analysis unit, just keep pushing through it and do not be afraid to ask a question if you need help or don't understand. This year is extremely fun and have a good time! Good luck!

Sincerely, Sigal A.

6/8/12

Dear Future 8th Grade Student,

This is your old school mate talking to you from the past. You are now entering the scary jungle of 8th grade english. The only way that you can survive is do exactly what I say. First and most importantly pay attention in class every day. That is something that I failed to do. Secondly, do your english homework as soon as you get home so you don't forget about it which is very easy and if you forget what you learned in class or still don't understand make sure to email Ms. Koh immediately so you will be able to work on your english papers. Finally do not procrastinate. It will be very hard to write your essay the day before it's due and get a good grade.

What I wished I had done differently was ask more questions. If you don't do this you won't become to be the strong regal jungle cat that always gets hard earned "A" grades from your master Ms. Koh. If you don't do this you will just be a small weak greedy mouse. English is a great jungle to learn in but even when you think that you hate it I promise you that you will thank Ms. Koh for what she has taught you after you go into high school.

The last thing you need to know to survive in the english jungle. You need to be patient. Your A's will come. You need to just relax and and try your

hardest and you will be find. Don't be worried. I have great faith in you that you will be able to succeed. The last thing I have to say is have fun and remember your 8th grade experiences in all of your classes they go by so fast.

Good Luck!

Sincerely,
Michael H.

Dear incoming 8th graders,

You are now eighth graders, give yourself a pat on the back for coming this far. As of right now you may think you know everything you need to know about eighth grade English but you probably don't. In eighth grade English you work on Critical thinking skills and Analytical skills. I suggest you pay attention and work hard because these skills are hard to grasp and can be hard to achieve. I myself am still working on how to master these skills. There is a time for fun and there is a time for seriousness and you need to learn the difference because you may miss something if you are having fun during a serious talk/moment. For eighth grade English you should probably know that it is the hardest curriculum because of the Critical thinking.

Some may disagree with me but the majority will not because Critical thinking is not like math. It's not something you can just pick up right away, it's something that takes time and maturing. Beside from the fact that eighth grade English is the hardest, you have a lot of fun too. One of the projects you may do is the Outliers project. You read a chapter of the book and teach the class about what you read. You have to devise activities so visual learners will grasp the topic better and so the class will be more interesting. Another project is the Historical fiction project. Those of you who became insane writing the Tzedakah essay will love this project. You find 50 facts about a certain time period about someone who is being discriminated against and write a fiction story about it using your 50 facts.

One of my favorite projects throughout the year was probably the ad project. It's about creating your own company and their product. You can't use pre-existing companies but you can use pre-existing products such as shoes. This

project is fun because you make your own company, no restrictions and you make a message you want to give to the class about your project. This is a very creative year but there are many tests and 5 paragraph essays. Have a good year and have fun!!

Wornick Alumni,
Max L.

Dear incoming 8th grade,

Good luck in Ms. Koh's class. 8th grade, while it is the hardest year of school by far, is also the most rewarding to finish and has the greatest curriculum. The curriculum last year in English was an absolute blast to learn. I know you all will love it, because it really changes your views on the world in a crazy way. I know that your class having her for the past two years will help your knowledge of how to behave and act in her class. She is the best English teacher I've ever had up to high school by *far*, and knows what she is doing. You guys will probably hate this year because of all the tough projects (I know I did at one point or another) but when you finish the project and unit, you will be rewarded with new knowledge. Whatever happens, even if you do not think that whatever you are learning will help you in the future or you don't understand something, *DO NOT STRESS ABOUT IT*. That's just part of 8th grade. I know that Ms. Koh will help you if any of you have problems with the curriculum.

There are so many great projects that you will do this year, like the Outliers teaching, creating an advertising agency of your own, and writing a historical fiction story. Outliers is a great book that will change your views on society and the individual, I know it did for me. The theme this year is the relationship between society and individuals. You will read all types of

books about this relationship, and it will really help you think about the world. You will also talk about empathy and discrimination and read Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. This comes up again and again during the year, and also in other subjects.

Remember to apply your knowledge gained in English to other subjects, especially Social Studies, where the curriculum goes hand-in-hand. Remember to space out your work time. If you have a two-week project, *don't* leave all of it for the weekend before. It really doesn't help you. Don't procrastinate. Have fun! Remember that this is all for your benefit. Remember to get as much out of this year as humanly possible.

8th Grade was the best year of Wornick I had, and I know it will be for you!

Sincerely,

Sam S.

6/8/12

Dear incoming 8th graders,

Be prepared for this year. I'm not going to lie to you, english with Ms. Koh in 8th grade is hard and challenging. If you put in all your effort and pay attention in class you will do well. I know everyone tells you to make sure to balance how much of your homework you do overnight but in 8th grade you really need to do this or you actually won't be able to do good on assignments. Ms. Koh expects well-written essays, so if you get an essay due in two weeks you should start working on it that night because every night you have to edit is valuable time. It might sound confusing now but it's very important to know that you know or at least know that you don't know. What I mean by this is you need to know your strengths and weaknesses because without self-awareness, of what you can and cannot do, you can never

improve.

A very important skill you will learn this year in connotative analysis, which is a way to analyze a word, phrase, or paragraph. At first it seems impossible to successfully use connotative analysis but be patient and know that if keep working on it you will get better. Make sure to balance your personal life with the homework you have. If you do homework every night for a good amount of time, you won't have to do homework all day Sunday.

I wish that I had had more of an open mind at the beginning of the year because I thought I knew way more than I did. More than anything I wish that I hadn't worried so much about my grade because I learned so much more when I stopped worrying about my grades. What you need to know for next year is if you slack off you probably won't do well. If you procrastinate and do your essay the night before it's due, you probably won't get a good grade.

Ms. Koh is preparing you for English in high school and don't expect English to be easy. If you don't put much effort into English it might be easy, but then you aren't learning anything. You will learn many important skills this year and the most important thing to do this year is to keep an open mind, pay attention in class, and exhibit self-awareness.

Sincerely,

Sophie T-B

06/08/12

Dear incoming 8th graders,

I hope that you guys don't procrastinate as much as I did. Also I wish I took more notes. I would usually stay up late or work the minute I got home from school because I had an assignment due the next day. Of course, it showed a lot in my work. When it comes to major essays, assignments or

even just studying for a small quiz, plan out your work ahead of time so you can get all your work done and have extra time for edits (trust me, you will want to edit like crazy). Also, take notes on topics you have a hard time on. For example, I had a really hard time on connotative analysis, which you will learn later in the year. My advice is to take notes and ask questions if you are confused otherwise, the class would move on leaving you in the dust. Finally, don't get overwhelmed, that doesn't solve anything, keep going; even if you have writers' block. Once you get started, the rest will flow out of you, you just need to go through the hardest part.

You should know that right before the Israel trip, you will get trampled with work. But when that time comes, the best thing you could do is not to panic. As said start with the hardest assignment. Finally, SCPs. The more you get used to them, the easier they get.

Sincerely,

Jordan B., Alumni of 2012

6/8/12

Dear incoming 8th graders,

There are quite a few things you should be prepared for in your 8th grade year with Ms. Koh. You will spend a lot of time on connotative analysis, so if you are confused just concentrate on everything she teaches

and practice when you're told to. If, after about two weeks, your connotative analysis is really bad and you are just writing down what your group comes up with or what the class discusses; don't. If you just do your best, Ms. Koh can help you learn from and fix your mistakes. I wish I'd spent more of my personal free time doing so because connotative analysis follows you through the rest of your life and will be an important asset.

Something I wish I'd done differently was procrastination. Sometimes assignments will be given a long time ahead of time, so people will think *I don't have to start because I've got lots of time*. Then the two weeks left reminder speeds around the corner and you're scrambling to merely find a good idea.

The historical fiction story was one of the most fun writing assignments you will do, although that's just my one-sided opinion. You will learn helpful writing assets, such as similes, metaphors, sensory detail, onomatopoeias, and dialog. When the assignment was first given I felt overwhelmed with the project because it just sounded like another essay. However, creativity paid off and I felt like my fiction writing improved a great deal because I learned how to suck readers into the moment instead of just babbling on about context.

Summing up, ask questions when you're confused and focus a lot, especially on analysis and critical thinking, don't procrastinate, and take advice you're given whether it's edits on an essay from you're peers or a tip from Ms. Koh. Be aware of your strengths and weaknesses and BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF!

Sincerely your friend,
Hannah B.

Dear Incoming 8th Graders,

If I had received some of the advice I am about to give you, I would have done a lot differently. I would have tried a lot harder, I would have been less stressed and I definitely think I would have gotten better grades than I did this year.

Tip 1: Stay organized! I know that Ms. Koh's letter/number system is complicated to keep track of, but if you stick to it it will help you SOO much in the long run. Organization is an important skill that you will have to use for the rest of your life! Being able to keep all of your assignments organized will help you refer to them in the future, which will definitely help you as you progress through the year.

Tip 2: Edit, edit and edit some more. Editing is one of the most powerful tools you have to improve your writing. Editing helps you become a lot more aware of your strength and weaknesses, which are important to recognize. It also improves your writing, analysis, and critical thinking skills. However, don't only limit yourself to self-editing. The people around you are an asset, and you should utilize that! Not only are your parents experienced writers after being through countless years of education, but your peers are some of the smartest people you know. Being able to talk to your classmates about assignments and peer editing will help build both of your editing skills, and will also improve your individual writing skills and the piece of work itself.

Tip 3: Build a strong relationship with Ms. Koh. As your teacher, she is your number one most helpful resource. Yeah, I totally get how sometimes teachers can be intimidating. However, being able to ask your teacher for help is a skill that you're going to need throughout the rest of your education. Your teacher will be able to answer your questions better than anyone else (but you should ask your classmates first, teachers work harder than anyone else. You'll learn about that during your teaching projects later this year.) Ms. Koh is an amazing teacher, and I have learned so much from her. If you build that bridge between you and her, it will help you so much later on in the year.

Tip 4: Find a way that works for you to de-stress and unwind. One major part of eighth grade is stress, no matter how efficient you are with your work/studying. Whether that strategy is listening to music, doing some yoga

or eating cookie dough, make sure you have one or more coping strategies to help you get through the intense patches of the eighth grade.

Tip 5: Procrastination is your worst enemy. Of all the tips I'm giving you, this is **THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE**. Procrastination has so many bad effects that outweigh watching the new TV episode, taking a break, Skyping with your friends, or any other way you can think about procrastinating. Not only does it lead to being overly stressed, which is terrible (discussed in Tip 4), but it also reflects in your work. When you rush an important piece of work, it doesn't come out anywhere close to as well-written as it could have. Take it from an expert: however great and fun and relaxing whatever you're doing instead of your homework is, it's not worth it. Missing assignments and getting low grades on assignments will impact your semester grade **SO MUCH**. Procrastinating isn't worth a low semester grade and a bucketload of stress.

Lastly, appreciate and absorb everything you learn this year, because it's going to help you so much in the long run. Good luck: this is going to be one of the most rewarding years of your life.

Love,
Leora A. :)

Dear incoming 8th graders!

Hellooooooooo!!!!!!! When I first started 8th grade I was really worried. I was worried because my grades in 8th grade affect which high schools I can get into. If you are going to public high schools it doesn't really matter, but if you are aiming towards private high schools, the first semester is what really matters. You may even want to go all the way to taking the battery out of your phone, and deactivating your facebook if you get distracted easily, like me. Just always know that no matter how much pressure you may feel, in the end of the day, you will live.

It is always important to do your work as best you can, even if you think it is horrible. Ill be honest with you; I have a problem with procrastinating. I always save **ALL** my homework till the day before it's due. The night before it's due, I usually spend the whole night doing the homework instead of

sleeping. DONT DO THAT! I wish I could listen to my own advice. Even though I usually got all my work done on time, it still affected my results. Leaving it till the last moment it really didn't leave me any time to edit my work or proofread it. The quality of my work really goes down. DO YOUR BEST AND DON'T MAKE REGRETS!

Mr. President Phillip Y.

Dear incoming 8th Grader,

Welcome to 8th Grade! I hope you're excited for your last year at Wornick! Trust me, in all my 9 years here, they've saved the best for last. However, it is also the hardest. Here's some advice for English this year, that I learned from experience:

Make sure to always turn in your homework on time. Besides reducing your grade, turning in homework late gives YOU less time to work on the next assignment. Instead of buying you time, it actually does the opposite.

You're going to learn a lot of analysis this year. Make sure that your analyses are super deep. Don't just talk about a message, talk about feelings, personality traits, and other things that you think may have nothing to do with the thing you're analyzing.

If you end up teaching this year, make your lesson super creative and original. Don't just make it one, long, boring lecture with treats given out at the end, make the actual class fun, with lots of engaging activities. Think about it: You have 2 entire periods of English class completely under your control; make it the best lesson ever for you and your students.

When you write your Historical Fiction Stories, make sure it's a story you would want to read. Think of a good book you read or are reading, and try to write in that style. A good story comes from how it's written, not from what happens in the plot.

RELAX..... During tough times, just keep telling yourself: "Everything will end up fine". Stress does not come from huge workloads, it comes from how you react to it. Take it easy. Get lots of sleep. Enjoy your weekend. Just remember to do at least a minimal amount of work every single day, even for things that are due in a long time. This way, your work will get done while you enjoy your personal life.

I hope you enjoy your last year at this school. Remember to make the most of it, make every memory count.

Sincerely,
Abigail A.

Dear beginner of 8th grade,

To begin with, I didn't have it very easy. At the start of the year, I went into English class with a cocky ego, and thinking that I could do everything right. I thought all the words I placed on a page were magical and didn't take advice from anyone, including and most regretfully, Ms Koh.

I found out, much too late, during the middle of the year, that this was a big mistake. Unfortunately this neglect was reflected in my end of the semester grades. I struggled a lot this past year but by the end, I finally learned from my mistakes, took the advice I was offered, and succeeded.

My success was not as much represented in my end of the year grade as much as it was reflected in my once over-blown ego. I am now confident of my abilities and am optimistic about my future in English classes. I feel prepared to face all of the challenges that lie before me in high school and made it through what seemed to be an extremely tough eighth grade year.

I'm aware that this experience may not have anything to do with you, but the point I'm trying to convey is that eighth grade was a lot of hard work, I'm not going to lie, but it DOES pay off. Immensely, I promise. So study hard, from the start of the year, (unlike me) and try your best to prepare yourself for the years to come.

Sincerely,
Erica S.

Dear incoming 8th graders,

I know you are all really excited to start 8th grade, the last year of Middle School. Of course, each grade is harder than the next, but this year was a big challenge, especially in English. I would like to give you some tips for 8th Grade English class:

Don't come in with a big head – When I started I thought my work was good and when someone had edited my work, I got mad that they didn't see what I saw. Going through all of the writing assignments I finally was able to grasp that the edits really do make my work much better than before. I wish I could start over and actually take the feedback I got, because it will really help your writing. One will always need help when it comes to English(Oh, yeah, in formal essays, use 'one' instead of 'you' or 'they').

Never think you're a master – Malcolm Gladwell, the author of Outliers, (a book you'll be reading) says that it takes 10,000 hours to be consistently good at something. In English, I feel that statement is untrue, because of how many topics and styles there are in Writing. It is important to look over your work and put your best effort in every time.

Do your homework before other activities – It really took me a long time to follow this rule, and sometimes I still have trouble with it! If you have an assignment, work on that and then add other fun activities in. I love watching TV, going on the computer, and playing sports, but TRUST ME: You'll have time to do it after the homework!

Spread large assignments over a period of time – I used to tell myself, “Oh, this weekend, I’ll get this huge project done.” Well, I wasn’t that good at estimating, either.... I ended up spending all of the time I thought it would take me and more :(It’s better to do small parts day by day and go over before it’s due, because you won’t be nearly as stressed and you’ll probably do a better job too.

If you follow these rules, you will have a great start in your English class this year, BUT don’t think that this is all you need to do!

Listen to Ms. Koh, work hard and write well!

Best of Luck,

Jillian O.